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THE SHIP-MAKERS

THE SHIP-MAKERS

AND OTHER VERSES

BY

JANETTA I. W. MURRAY

188

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500

TO
THE MEMORY
OF
MY FATHER
WILLIAM ARBUCKLE MACKIE
SHIPBUILDER
GOVAN

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TO AN APRIL INDIAN

My Indian warrior, it is spring;
I look, and look, and long for you.
The roofs are wet with sweet, spring rain,
The crocus-beds are purple-blue.

The bowling-green looks very fresh,
All newly washed by strong, March showers.
Its border sends forth slender shoots
Of promise for the coming hours.

But, O Great Chief, I cannot feel
That radiant spring is here for me,
Till round the green I watch you come
In all your warlike panoply.

Till up our terrace trim you steal
Amid your shadowy host of braves,
Spring is not here, though every bird
Be trilling o'er its mating staves.

I live but to renew those thrills
With which last spring I used to see
You track the unhappy Pale-face down,
Splendid in native savagery.

Could I but see your feathered crest,
Your pasteboard shield, and leaf-tipped spear
In ambush lurk behind a lamp,
I would believe that spring is here.

When to attack the tall stockade
I watch you crawl along the lane,

While our policeman saunters past,
I'll know that spring has come again.

Buffalo-tongues, and pemmican,
A wigwam, and birch-bark canoe,
Wampum, and scalps, and tomahawks,
To tempt you forth I offer you.

The calumet we too will smoke,
And hold a pow-wow at our ease,
Or mount upon our swift mustangs,
Or hunt the moose among the trees.

To be your medicine-man I'd love,
And tell the tribe as years go by
Of how Olelbis first did build
The sacred Wigwam in the sky.

I'll dance with you the wild war-dance ;
There shall not be a fiercer brave ;
And stores of fragrant basketry
And splendid bead-work you shall have.

While I am your devoted squaw,
Fine shall your acorn-flour be ground ;
And I shall sing old plaintive songs,
And work your buckskins round and round.

With strange designs in quills and beads,
With graceful fringe I'll make them gay,
While my papoose in cradle quaint
Swings from his oak-bough all the day.

Where blue clouds from the camp-fires rise,
We'll wake and sleep pure poetry,

If only you will come again
And bring eternal spring to me.

So come, my Indian warrior, come,
I look, and look, and long for you.
The wet slates gleam 'neath fresh, spring rain,
The crocus-beds are purple-blue.

A CHILD OF THE GHETTO

A child came to me out of the want of the Ghetto
Where the refugees struggle and crowd.
Like a flower from a gean-tree she fell
To my hand as her place,
And the dream of the alien soul
Spread white wings o'er her face.

She bowed herself over her task
As a bee o'er its bloom ;
Drank sunshine and sweetness as though
They were clues to a quest ;
Took delight with her boisterous mates
As a road through a dream ;
Found in climbing some stairway of effort
Her peace and her rest.

Like home-thoughts of an alien race
The child faded in winter.
She died on the air like a misty white breath of desire.
The lamp of her flesh grew so clear
It let through the soul's intimate fire.

I have seen the white soul
Of home-longings of alien peoples.
I have seen their relief ;
How they build themselves out of pure beauties
New homes among strangers.
I have tasted their grief
On the lips of a child,
In the prayer of her inbrooding grace
As she fell like a petal of gean
To my breast—her own place.

THE BAKER'S GIRL

Good company, you know, is always young.

The baker's girl convoys me on my way.

"Hoo mony miles? O wheesht noo, haud yer
tongue!

It's just no' possible fur me tae say.

Ma mither ettles A maun hae a rise,

A walk that faur, A'm that sair on ma shüine.

A pit thae guid yins on at the New Year;

A've had them soled and heeled and they're near
düne.

A've acht and sax, but maybe A'll get ten."

Then, with a merry glint from pale blue eyes,

"A'm no' bad noo, but A'll be better then."

A PARK IN MAY

A place of gold and flaming rose,
Azalea-clumps and daffodils ;
Soft stealing may-bloom's fragrance fills
The air o'erhead ; the lime-tree throws
Its unregarded sheaths away.
On the new grass the children play.
Their babbling, curious raptures say,
" 'Tis May ! 'Tis May !"
How sweet is May !

Poor daisies gripped in chubby hands
Wilt barren ; dreamers wonder why
The flowers they pluck so swiftly die ;
Death laughs to see Youth cast him by.
Through the new grass soft breezes blow,
On the new grass gay children strew
Their unregarded spoil. They say,
" 'Tis May ! 'Tis May !"
Swift fleeteth May !

MONDAY IN THE SUBURBS

I

The sparrows are eating the hearts
Of my gay, golden crocuses:
The purple and white they pass by.
Are they greedy of sun-gold as I
That they peck out the hearts of my gay, golden
crocuses?

What a chatter of starlings I hear
From the old ivied walls,
Where new leaves tender green
Mid black-green of old foliage appear!
What a dance of small dresses in air
From clothes-lines over there!
What a filling of gay little socks
At the sportive caprice of a breeze
From the South, purring loud as it rocks
To and fro the bare boughs of the trees!

The sparrows are eating the hearts
Of my gay golden crocuses;
Clouds o'erstream the blue sky;
A grey sea-gull floats by;
'Tine's sparrows are eating the hearts of youth's gay,
golden crocuses.

II

You should see my clothes flap on the line
When the March wind sings;
You should see March sunshine
On my clean white things,

Gold-white billows, clear blue shadows,
As the mad wind flings
Up a shirt and down an apron,
Here a towel and there a sheet,
Ghosts of prisoned desperadoes,
Crowded sails without a fleet.
Swelling, twisting, tossing, streaming,
With a snowy lustre gleaming,
Gay and careless, sweet and fragrant,
 In the March sunshine,
You should hear and see my "washing" on the line.

ULTIMA THULE

She thought in Gaelic. All her English speech
Was slow and halting, with a sibilance
Of hiss on hiss. She spoke as through thick wool;
Stammering, idly, like the lap of waves
You hearken after in some woodland pool
Mist-shrouded, hear at last beat faint and low.
She looked afar as though nought near could know,
Eyes sick with longing for wild wind-swept space;
Looked till the dull look faded from her face
And, where her dreams danced, danced her pent soul
too.

Stupid she seemed, and dour, and soft and still,
Moved by an alien, deep, instinctive will,
Having no words to tell her grief and pain,
Her horror of this town. She left her bed
One night unslept in, sought and found the quays,
A boat for Lewis, and sailed home again.

LA JUIVE DORÉE

I watch a Hyndland Jewess all the way to town.
Hair-strands flash gold, but, near the roots, black-
brown ;
Through powdering pinkness skin's dark texture
shows ;
Beneath bold gleaming eyes an arching nose
Proclaims beyond dispute the ancient race
Of the strong creature ; even although an air
Of sensuous power about full bust, round hip,
The curving invitation of a lip
Crimson and pouting, had been wanting there.
Perfumed and girt about, a luring grace,
My silken Jewess with a powdered face,
Her gilded hair betraying native brown,
I watched from Hyndland all the way to town.

I watched from Hyndland all the way to town
My pampered Jewess hung with gems and gold,
A rustling opulence of fleshly charm,
From the gold reticule upon her arm
To the plumed turban on her heedless head.
Watching her so, deep in my heart I said,
“ There sits the flesh of Jewry, is its soul there too,
That soul which dreamed one God in days of old
And clave to Him through wanderings manifold,
That soul whose dreams we greet with honour
due?

Daughter of Israel, hast thou still a nail
For Sisera—the proud fierce hand of Jael?”
Beneath her gilded locks their roots show brown ;
The silken Jewess loiters into town.

Watching my silken Jewess into town,
"She is enticing," thought I, "when so graced,
Supple and lazy, she lolls, soft and round,
Slim, full thigh-curves, firm line of bust and waist,
But youth will fade swift from that form and
face.

Alluring now, harsh and repellant grow
Soon such marked features, such limbs grossly
show.

Most cloying is rich Persian attar found,
And her strong sweets would pall if they could
last.

But, transient as exotic, Time's embrace
Is hot about her, all her beauties go
As though they had not been, leaving her so
The ark and symbol of her ancient race."
Drawn in the present through dead ages down,
I watched my silken Jewess all the way to town.

My silken Jewess on her way to town
I saw within my questing fantasy,
Her red bloom faded, by the ancestral tree
Of her tenacious folk. A crone to me
She muttered unregarded ages o'er ;
In immemorial strangeness brooded far.
Gone was the fleshly creature of the car,
Suffused and sunk. The bright memorial star
Of Syrian Canaan gleamed through alien day ;
Out of the blood-stained past from far away
Rose Miriam's song beside the parted sea.
The symbol of a changeless race and power,
Suffering and thinking with long constancy,
Shone through my Jewess in youth's very hour

That is the body's : straight went down
Before it Beauty, Love and Luxury.
In her bold eye the far East challenged me :
Long persecutions shuddered and crept by.
She did not know 'twas so, nor wondered why.
With gilded hair o'er roots of native brown
The Hyndland Jewess loitered into town.

LOVE IN THE CITY

A stately corridor for kissing in !
Seats in a row,
A fountain plashing slow,
Ducks by a pond,
A placid stream beyond,
Riches of spire and tower
Black in the evening hour
Against ripe sunset-rose—
“A stately corridor for kissing in,”
Says one who knows.

We saw a plot of misty lupins there,
An elfin army, rhododendrons, too,
Cream, mauve, to dull maroon,
And long laburnums drooped in silken swoon,
Grapes of pale sunshine, peace of afternoon.
As the dusk fell you drew me close to you,
And, while a thousand lovers breathed fond vows in
 air,
Swearing their hearts most true,
We knew ours were,—and all the world most fair.

Most fair and solitary, though but half a seat
Were ours for Eden, and another Eve
Another Adam kissed, and clasped hard by.
Desire can charm the wandering ear and eye.
From distant realms re-echo passing feet
When we in love's Elysium languid sigh.
This dull half-bench is Eden fast and sure.
Night in her purple folds
Our young vows passionate, pure.

Eternity, a breathing moment holds.
God stayeth Time to our conjoined heart-beat.

A stately corridor for kissing in !
The ribald smile. You flaunt your prize in me,
The male triumphant as the male should be.
All simple pairing-loves in joy are walking.
Tongues speech forget, and hands entwined are
talking.

Dark spires athwart the glowing roseate air,
Prayerful and vigilant, rise everywhere.
Day hath a rosy death, and I am your day's rose.
"A stately corridor for kissing in,"
Says one who knows.

A NIGHT IN THE CITY

Last night, my love, I brewed at eve for you
Tea in a pot of wood-smoked gipsy-black.
Now, tell me true, does all we have to-night
Make up in sweetness for the things we lack?

Well, well, the essential in each case is met.
Be it in restaurant or wilderness,
For you and me, beloved, the feast is set,
And o'er the board we look a long caress

Now of the busy world, as gipsies then,
We bring to what we eat a palate fine.
Our eyes appraise the divers sorts of men
That sit beside us as alone we dine.

Two city-fathers these! What flabby cheeks
And vulture noses! Bleared carnivori,
Simple and sure! Watch that one as he speaks.
How his jaw sags with greed and gluttony!

Yonder's an officer on leave, see, dear,
Come with his wife to fête his short respite;
How like a sacrament such meals appear!
How sacred love, of which they are a rite!

There's the New Army fashion! Cheek by jowl
Sit full lance-corporal and full brigadier,
One in enjoyment of fish, flesh and fowl.
Old etiquette is neither there nor here.

You prefer curry; I eat mayonnaise;
With something sweet "to follow" for us both;

Cheese then and coffee ; dreaming still green days
Of woodland joys we late to leave were loth.

Gay talk then, swift as scintillating play
Of rapiers in some sudden frolic fight :
Your blue eyes dart wild beams of yesterday,
Love's sunbeams shed o'er flowerful meadows
bright.

A music-hall ? That's good. This cloak you love,
So darkly rich with silken black o'er gold,
And when I catch it round me as I move
It hints a secret sweetness through each fold.

I guess that. Oh, how strange it seems to me
To walk beneath the eye of your desire.
I wonder can this girl indeed be she
Who danced o'er lone moors once, a blue wisp-fire.

Now, you may smoke. No tension here is known
Of mind as in a play. The mummers pass
Jigging and dancing, talk in brazen tone,
Shed tired smiles fixed as from a looking-glass.

Our thoughts they lull to pleasant idle sleep,
So no deep musing dark with life of old
Out of the storied past rising may creep
To break brief rest with Fate's prevision cold.

Look, these are lovers too ! Fine, dark and young
Is the tall officer. How fair seems she
In her rich mantle close about her flung
And black tulle shroudings ! Now, which may she
be,

Sweetheart or wife or some mere light-of-love?
The diamonds in her ears gleam sharply fair,
Quiver like frost-rays as her white breasts move;
Dark at the roots is her waved golden hair.

She turns to him. Accomplished coquetry
With a live passion speaks in every line
Of her white shoulder. Whatso'er she be,
Her heart is one with his as yours with mine.

Quick, watch her profile as she smiles!
There's age, sure, grinning, neath that play of
youth;
And her expression in its tender wiles
Yet lacks the sweetness wild of innocent truth.

You say she feels my eyes on her, my dear:
They are not blaming eyes, then, well you know.
Perhaps she merely thinks we two appear
Lovers as they. Hearts hail each other so.

Now they are gone. Let us be going too,
Out where the clear-eyed night breathes cool and
calm
Over the throbbing city vast and blue,
Breath of the Eternal all-sustaining "Am."

A taxi! "Yes, sir." In your arms you fold
Me, your recovered world of lost delight,
Whispering tendernesses since of old
The hovering doves of every passionate night.

Dark street, dark houses, darker groves slip by,
Lights over twining shadows flickering play.

My soul within your soul this night doth lie,
A memory graved that cannot pass away.

AN OLD PRINT

A Glasgow of a sleepy street or so !
At Govan, barefoot, you can ford the Clyde,
And almost all along the riverside
Are pleasant meadows where the housewives go
To wash their linen. Do you think they'd know,
Those citizens, who sleep in decent pride
Under their flat green stones, this deep-delved tide
Fringed with uncounted quays, this spreading maze
Of thronged and throbbing streets, this cauldron
 strange
Of men and things ? For river and douce town
Should they look up or (from heaven's rampart)
 down,
Would they admire, or shudder at the change
Come over both since their more tranquil days ?
Would they admire, or shudder at our ways ?

MUGDOCK

ABOUT 1637

“Golf-balls,” “Tobacco,” the account-book says,
Were his most costly outlay. Well! the green
Shows rich-piled velvet, as it may have been
When the old Marquis idled easeful days
In putting there. Treading these upland ways,
’Tis good to taste his pleasure in the scene
He looked on thence—the pleasant Blane ravine,
Westwards the great Bens in a sunset haze.
Was it from here, perchance, the greater Graeme,
Ere the Red Lion in two by feud was riven,
In ’37 to the Assembly came,
And here returned, to question if troth given
To Scotland’s Church outweighed the Stuart name,
Royal Romance his hopes of Calvin’s heaven?

PROVAND'S LORDSHIP

'Tis here, some say, she penned those guilty lines,
Bale-flowers of passion—she whose charms can stir
Men's souls to longing with the thought of her,
Unfading through long years—a grace that shines
Royal and subtle as a damask rose—smiles, heady
wines

Men drink to sleep—a breathing East of myrrh—
Such cool, white sweet its burning lure divines
None, till he melt and perish in its fire—
Mary of Scots! that queen of mystery
From here, some say, wrote all her hot desire
To graceless Bothwell, for whose favour she
Cast down her State, and in the plotters' wire
Was taken, while she thought to set her free,
But lit in passion fair fame's funeral pyre.

ON BALGRAY HILL

One house of many on a windy hill
Where houses nest in gardens, but an air
It has of age, as though it had been there
For many a day, and lived in old days still.
Odours of apple-bloom the blue noon fill :
A priest is walking in that garden fair
With flowers of later May : his head is bare,
His mitre laid aside ; he walks at will
With nature in a dream of perfect peace :
On his forefinger, amethystine gleams
The ring episcopal : short is this blest release
From shepherd-cares about his diocese.
Charmed against time this quiet Eden seems ;
The old house knows : the bishop's garden dreams.

A PICTURE WITHIN A RING

The Silver-bearded o'er his brazier sits,
Under his tent, pitched by the coppice-rim.
Each red flame with the night-breeze glows and
flits.

The voices of the night float up to him.

The maid, white-kirtled, her blue pitcher bears.
Floating, a slip of youth, athwart his dreams.
Spun red-gold tresses are the crown she wears.
Blush-rose full-petalled, in the dusk she seems.

I. from the trees, watching the fire-light fall
Merry and soft upon his grey, her gold,
Feel night aquiver with pale shades that call,
Watchers and maids, from camp-fires long since
cold.

Silvered with age and grizzled grim with toil,
Stern warrior-heroes, like my watchman, raise
In his red fire bright heaps of old war-spoil,
Long-fabled treasures of forgotten days.

To them as him slim maidens pitchers bear,
Youth's meeds of honour, ministers of age,
Bending a heedless ear to long-spun tales,
Each in her spirit wiser than her sage.

Time is forgotten by the watchman's fire.
The tall, white maid, flushed rosy in the light,
Thrills with soft laughter of unwaked desire.
The old man's youth is walking in the night.

THE OYSTER-MAN

Thickens dusk, quickens dusk !
Far voice croons in Memory's ear,
"Caller oysters, caller ou !"
Down the road of yester-year,
Echo there, echo here,
Melancholy notes and clear,
Calling, "Oysters, caller oysters!"
"Caller oysters, caller ou !"

Home-fires make gloaming rosy-bright.
Street-lamps let pale, whistling flames
Stream adown the winds of night.
Tossed willow-gold sways overhead.
Gold willow-catkins flushing red,
Cling frail above, are wide-strewn neath each light.

Through gathering mirk, a child that used to be
Dreams homeward, shaken with bare, tossing
 boughs,
Thrilled by despoilings of the pale saugh-tree.
Fire-light leaps, enchanted red,
Dancing black and gold are shed
Over long tales, wide realms of faerie,

Till, in the sleepy hour, the Oyster-man,
An evening wraith of chanting, chiming notes,
Plays with fire-creatures wildest catch-who-can,
Letting his mournful voice and light bell ring
'Gainst Goody Clock's incessant muttering
Curfew of long, grey days that misty grey began.

I never saw the Oyster-man, but he,
In gold and silver web of evening things
Twined, a sea-stained thread, took shape to be
A wandering shade of monstrous gramarye.
I never saw him, but his cry is there,
For me, half realized, in every air
That utters twilight of old minstrelsy.

The quivering music of gaunt, leafless trees,
In childhood's restless wood, of grey thought's mood.
Quicken dusk, thicken dusk,
That far, low voice, unbodied, faintly rings,
As olden sadness sings
Dully in Memory's ear,
"Caller oysters, caller ou!"
Down the road of yester-year,
Echo there, echo here,
Plaintive brooding notes and drear
Of the oyster-man
Calling, "Oysters, caller oysters!"
"Caller oysters, caller ou!"

THE RAG-AND-BONE-MAN

The buyer of rags and of bones,
I am nought other, gentles, am I
In my cart, sagging sacking below,
With my donkey so subtle and sly?
My whirligigs turn in the air,
My balloons flutter fair,
And I tootle my battered tin trumpet
As I pass by.

You crowd round with your bones and your rags,
You come fast with your bottles, and fair
Float my strung balloons red, blue, and green,
My windmills turn gaily in air;
Best prayer-wheels ever seen,
Balloons red, blue, and green;
For your rubbish I barter my baubles
More gorgeous than rare.

The buyer of rags and of bones,
I am more than that, gentles, am I?
I am Life, in my cart passing slow
Drawn on by an ass sad and sly.
I am Life, and I play on my way
Hoarse trumpet-calls emptily gay
Mid my frail balloons fluttering by.

I am Life, and I offer for rubbish you bring,
For débris of your virtues, loves, pelf,
My baubles, wild hopes and mad dreams,
Each certain to burst of itself.
Most gladly I carry your rubbish away;
Most freely with trifles your trouble I pay;

Ha, ha, nothing is what it seems !

The buyer of rags and of bones,
I am Life in my cart passing by.
I tootle my trumpet and call,
And my donkey is subtle and sly.
My windmills whirl madly in air,
My balloons glisten fair,
Soon they'll burst—you'll be ready for more
When again I pass by.

FLUTE FANTASY

1. Getting off
the Car. The
Car starts again.

The yellow, humming one
Stops to let me forth
Where night's sable
Glooms neath slaty-blue on grey.
Streamers o'er a sodden street,
Gold and rose, purple, green,
Dart their ragged ecstasy
Of sudden piercing sheen,
Cross and break everyway.

The yellow, humming one
Stirs and starts again.
Wild, and wilder, see,
Flickering streamers dance and dance,
While I turn from fluttered light
Where a row of pale lamps stretches
Out its patient pilgrimages
Through the desert of the night.

The yellow, humming one is gone.
The streamers cross and twine
Their rags of coloured light,
While I walk through slaty blueness
Blent with sable of the night.

2. Going up
the Street. Wind
and Moonlight.

The wind blows flurries over gutter-
pools ;
The lamp-flames gasp, and sink, and
leap ;
The wind-gusts sweep, and sweep, and
sweep.

In wanness spins the misty moon
Her shining dream of death.
The clouds and winds entangle her,
Entangle her, and tangle her,
In turgid, laboured breath,
In heavy locks of strife.
Through their toils, and tears, and
war

Of weary valiant life,
See her green-pale peacefulness,
The wraith-like calm of death !
The wind blows flurries in the gutter-
pools ;
White lamp-flames gasp, and sink, and
leap ;
Chill wind-gusts sweep, and sweep,
and sweep.

It rains no more !

3. A Lull.

The piercing wind-spears
Need no aid of hail or rain.
Between gusts, when roofs are shaking
Weary bodies, rattling slaty mail,
And wind-cries sink dumb,
Whimpering into silences
With thin sighs of taut-stretched
wire

And whispers of wet leaves,
There are pale, indifferent stars,
Pilgrim lamps, and elvish moons
In the gutter-pools.

It rains no more ;
The piercing wind-spears
Need no aid of hail or rain.

4. The Flute-
Player in the
Wind.

Here dark is thick,
And red-fingered, thinly clad,
A slight boy whistles down a flute.
Flute and wind ! flute and wind !
Rags of flute-song ! rags of wind-
song !
Chilly flute-song, torn to tatters,
Tossed and scattered,
As 'twere feathers, falling, beaten
From the icy, outstretched pinions
Of the freezing wind !
Feathered flute-song, tossed and
scattered,
Rent and battered
By a riot of wind-torment !
Crying in a chilly riot,
With a piercing, icy anguish
Of the freezing, shrieking wind !
Here dark is thick :
Blue-lipped and thinly clad,
A slight boy whistles down a flute.

5. The Flute-
Song loses its
Soul.

That chill fluting held a tune once ;
Had an air, a human air, once ;
Shrilled a little melody.
But the jagged wind hath rent it,
Till its crying, dying fragments
Have no thought of ought,
Ought that is heart-music ;
Are but débris, scattered débris,
Of a cosmic agony,
Breaking, breaking, peeling, scream-
ing,
Gusts of white and blue, on black,

Ragged, jagged, white, blue, black,
Down the air screaming, streaming,
Down the air, in despair.
Gone, the tune the clear flute told
 once,
Pleasant, human airs it breathed once,
Lost, its shrilling melody !

Flute-song is cool when 'tis a shy boy-
 soul

6. Pleasant
Flutings.

Dreaming itself a bird.

Flute-song in spring, love-sick, or
 scaling heaven,

Is sweetly sad, or clear, and pure, and
 fine,

Most singled-aimed, and true, and
 calm.

Flute-song is cool in lazy, summer
 hours,

By sleepy waters of a dusky wood,

Where dancing, white-foot, maids,

Tend softly cropping goats.

Flute-song wells idle up, a shadowed
 spring,

Or, from the summit of a mossy rock,

Falls in pearled sequence, pure drop
 o'er pure drop.

Flute-song in autumn, an ebullient
 wine,

From clear flask held between slim
 tender hands,

Is poured, and poured ; a shining
 golden stream,

Caught in a dark, green bowl

By strong, brown arm out-held :
Calm, golden moments streaming
steadily,
A softly sparkling tide,
A stream of wine to slake the thirst
of toil,
Flute-song of autumn, bubbling
merrily !

7. Winter
Flute Song.

Not such this winter fluting,
Perished, starveling, shivered, gaunt,
and wan !
Chill ! chill ! chill ! chill !
A frozen demon of the northern hell,
Eldritch and agonised !
Lifeless in energy,
In icy torment numbed !
Not so much human in it
As would fetch one groan
Hoarsened by loss or sorrow,
Tears of wrath or ruth !
This flute I hear is emptiness of heart
Made wildly active, sharply clamor-
ous,
In green-gray lambent tatters clad,
Mated in piercing sound
To chilliest restlessness of winter
wind !
A frozen demon of the northern hell,
Eldritch and agonised,
Wind shrieks, the winter flute !
Lost airs ! Lost souls !
A broken feather of an icy pinion
Down floating, floating,

A wind-shriek echoed !
Chill ! chill ! chill ! chill ! chill !

A WAYFARER

In the car speeding westwards
Black slums die away to grimed trees,
Streams are fouled with the usage of man ;
The country that flies its embrace,
Is o'er-blown by the blight of the town,
As the nymph looking back while she ran
Her god-ravisher saw, Green Peace sees
This black Titan swift tracking her down,
Feels black strength seize her shimmering grace.
Such the scene, from a car speeding westward.

Slouches in, what a giant ! (think I)
Sinks to rest on a seat, loosened, bent,
Dumps his pack by his side with a sigh,
Draws deep breaths of unmeasured content.
Tan corduroys crooked and stretched wide,
Red scarf round a loose grizzled chin. By his side
A stout blackthorn, I note.
The car lunges and thrums speeding westward.

The car stops on its humming flight westward.
Full of dreams is that car speeding westward.
In brown eyes sleeps drowned sun of brown pools,
On wide lips stirs low call of lone wind,
On a soft rugged face thirst for rain.
Large hands yearn towards blackthorn and pack,
Feet fret to be treading again
The long roadway that never turns back.
There's the quest without bourne of the mind,
Deep disdain of gold fetters of fools,
Ears eager for stillness that waits,
In the car speeding busily westwards.

In the car rushing westwards,
Just an old Irish navvy with dreams
In green-brown changeeful eyes,
With a smile tender-lipped,
Munching yellow plums while his heart flies
To slow-waving fields golden with grain,
Takes the long trail, the far track again
To old sad plain-song liltings that rise
Unbidden, wild fancies that gripped
His childhood so strongly he seems
Some strayed god of the wilds speeding westwards.

Just we two in the car speeding westwards.
I've a pack, and a stick, and a look
In my eyes of wild longing to take the long trail.
He proffers his plums with a smile.
The car gulps its last mile
In a clamourous wind-stirring rush.
We get down: he is gone in the hush,
As brown fish in brown stones of a brook,
As clear stars in clear dawn shimmering pale,
Where the lost gods hide far to the westwards.

LITTLE WHITE WINGS

"Little white wings," says the boy bending,
Pole in hand, down to his argosy.

"Little white wings, do you know I am sending
Things, things, rich things and many things,
Over the blue ocean to the green island
In you? Little gay white wings,
Little trim light wings, in you?
Listen to me, do you know what to do?

"Away, mimic thing, through the mimic waves!
An embankment by giants fashioned
Each ripple-billow laves.

I will away by the land, pole in hand,
Where the bees have a gay time
Over the red border,

Geraniums—the gardener's pride—
Stiff in trim order.

I will away by the land to yon far clime,
The green wondrous island
With its causeway and romantic railing,
Whither you, little white wings,
Laden with rich things and many things,
Piratical treasure beyond measure,
Are presently sailing.

"Ha! the cross white swan!

What a proud galleon!

How stately to look upon!

What an arched prow, and see, now,
Gilded beak too! Will he stop you,
Little white wings, on your swift way?
Your course will he stay

To take toll, little white wings,
Of your treasure piratical,
Demanding some or all
Of your rich things and many things,
Ship of my heart, little light gay wings?
He swims that way. Not at all!
He dips his proud head to my pennon.

“A race! A race!
Little white wings, do me proud now
Against Jack’s, yonder lubber craft.
Methinks too soon Jack laughed
At your cut of canvas.
That’s right, girl, to windward!
Over the daisied sward
Jack and I, racing,
Our ships are pacing.
Well tacked, lass!
In first, I vow!
A clean win, little white wings!

“You knew well, ‘Saucy Sue,’
I had trusted to you
Rich things and rare things,
Piratical treasure beyond measure
And hopes and dreams time shall bring to pass too,”
Says the boy, pole in hand, over his argosy.
“What a rare unspoken thing,
I trusted for this voyage perilous, deep in my heart
to you.
You did what a stout ship should do
With your store of treasures fantastical.
You made a good landfall,
You made dreams come true.”

QUESTIONS

Will June have all her dusks of glowing blue,
And all her squandered sweets of blossomed tree,
For me and you,
For you and me?

And shall we walk by tower and terrace grey
Through silken foliage fair,
Bearing love's treasure westwards with the day
And tuning to low music passing air?

Shall we see willows sleeping in a stream,
And hawthorns rose and white,
And lilacs that divinely curled do seem,
And drooped laburnums' tongues of tender light?

Will June pavilion in deep veils of blue
And twine with myriad sweets of blossomed tree,
My—is it love?—for you,
Your love for me?

A CITY-GARDEN

A city-garden is a gracious thing,
And you with me
Are talking quietly
O'er the curved bench
Beneath the pale lime-tree.
I caught a vivid flash of birds awing ;
I caught your heart deep in your eyes on me.
A city-garden is a gracious thing
When nesting birds with love are on the wing.

If you regret the windows that espy
This trim enclosed peace,
Not so, beloved, do I.
I am content to talk harmoniously
With you in such graced quietude.
Wild impulses in wilder solitude
Are waiting, fierce and proud, love's "by-and-by."
I know them warmly there
And so through rain-washed air
Am well content the ordered hour awhile
To idle out in dalliance calm and fair,
From rhododendrons' clustered mauve and rose
To a grey stateliness of soaring tower
Gazing regardful, knowing you with me
Tuned to still pleasure and pure joy to be,
Savouring, now as then, forever, everywhere.

A city-garden is a gracious thing,
Eden enclosed in a full, ordered life,
Contentment's greenness, love's deep glowing rose,
Rhythm enrapt to calm through passion's strife,
The tender lover in the honoured wife ;

A city-garden is a gracious thing
When we are sitting talking quietly,
When your eyes look their life deep, deep, through
 me,
When holy hush to tower and tree doth cling,
When nesting birds with love are on the wing.

A CITY'S SHAME

I

THE CORNER-SHOP

Is it the cat that sits watching
Hard by the corner,
Bleared eyes half-close?
I think I saw sharp claws twitching and stretching
There in the shadow—God knows!

A train passes—shambling stragglers,
Seekers of witchery under the rose
Of the lights red-lidded,—what reek as they pass me
There in the shadow—God knows!

Dear do ye buy, black stumblers,
Nepenthe of shame and concealment
From that by the corner
Whose eyes half-close.
Fast in your flesh are the stark claws twitching
and stretching.
The cat sleeps snug in its corner—God knows!

II

THE GROTESQUES

They made grotesques in stone
But let the living die.
We like them living best—
A child deformed with rickets sidles by.

They were afraid to look
In shadows at their self-made pensive imps.

We are afraid of our mis-shapen clay
To catch in sunshine even one passing glimpse.

Are we ashamed of our mis-shapen clay
To catch in passing sunshine one dark glimpse?

III

THE CHILDREN

I heard the children laughing in the street,
A fairy stream that never ceasing flows,
Though from its limpid dimpled waters rose
Damp steamy foulness, it was clear and sweet.

I heard long fairy laughs in the street,
Like fretted spray o'er billowy traffic's roar,
And the reiterant push of lust for more
Than to contentment seemeth just and meet.

Drowned was that fairy music in a sheet
Of draggled rain, but rose in isolate notes,
Song of small birds that floats
In drowsy twilight-calls from out some lone retreat.

I heard the children laughing in the street
As still they laugh while still the heart is free,
And where their pain and want played merrily
My heart beat wildly neath their naked feet.

IV

THE LOST ONES

The song of those that sell their flesh for bread
I tried to take from one who passed me by,

But half of it was a demoniac laugh
The other half a hoarse resentful cry.

“My shame is mine, you shall not set it where
It draws the curious as a sucking wen
To a deformèd face. They drew
Me with a ribbon—Pass, and leave me in
The slough I fell to then.

“I have no song but a discordant laugh ;
No human body but a common way
Of flesh to dust. I look at women, too,
Like you, and watch then passing, and—
Have nought to say.”

The cry of those who sell their flesh for bread
I took from one who flaunted gaily by ;
At half of it a child laughed in my heart,
At half of it an angel wondered why.

V

THE MAN WITH THE BOTTLE

“See that wee bottle there ?”
Something winked mellow, orange-gold in air
Heavy and rank with fumes of breath and smoke.
The blotched degenerate spoke.
“Weel, if he kicks his goal afore half-time,
Out louns this cork, that doon ma thrapple. See?”
The looker-on in him
Woke unawares the looker-on in me.
A football-match at Hampden Park ! That’s clear
As is the blasphemy

That makes it clear to me
Of ought but bonhomie.
Thronged ramping muscles with degenerate clay
Bloated and soft, are paving pleasure's way
With talk oath-strewn.
An earth-soured Subway car! I feel it sway
Crowded and panting. It is Saturday.
Respited labour streams—'tis an affray
Of laughter and hoarse breath, the joy I mark—
Out to the football-match at Hampden Park.

I note my little blotched degenerate rise.
The votive bottle from his jacket-pouch
Bulges and blushes.
Then, since this queer life thus is,
I see through skin unclean and laggard slouch
A kind of hero-worship light pale eyes.

VI

A CONTRAST

A muffler of magenta, blue, and green,
First strikes the eye.
I fear lest presently
The face that lurks beyond it must be seen.
Fear? Yes!—In dreams a youth of Athens passed
me by.

A youth of Athens? Yes, indeed, and he
Was stripped for running, sparkling from the sea,
That sparkled blue neath the Acropolis.
To turn—ah me!—from such a dream to this!

A fungus of some noisome rotting wood,
A shape of foulness breathing forth again
The nauseating breath that fills his lungs.
The clinger to a ladder whence he kicks,
Even as he clings, his own supporting rungs.
The roller of vile speech o'er shameless tongue.
The treader in vile ways,
The searcher in the dung.

'Tis sweat of fettered labour in dull rain
Shapes that chimera gross, and foul, and bloat,
The matrix of his body, soul and brain.

A halflin hooligan to whom the street
Is all he knows of home, his spirit's shell !
I watched a youth of Athens on winged feet
Swift from blue sea sweep to white citadel.
Fair as white citadel or sparkling sea,
In lusty grace I saw that youth to be.

Muffled in filth, magenta, green, and blue,
The manhood of my race I saw that hour,
Leering on husks and shorn of grace as power,
Filch her best jewel from their land's coronal,
Spewing crude venom—harsh Time's filthiest brew—
Burst all the bonds of olden honour due.

A halflin hooligan laughing at law ;
Our doom is in the vileness he lets fall
From careless lips. Men of the merest straw
His state proclaims our rulers, and he is,
Lounging about our by-ways in the blaze
Of open day, as by night's thickening greys,

Your shame and mine, because he ought to be
Clean, proud, and strong, as one I dreamed was so
Of old in Athens by the sparkling sea.

GOING TO WORK

As I go to work
Through a city morning,
Over curled May green
A square tower rising !
That's wisdom set apart
In high grey calm
To teach youth's thought
Why this world's teeming heart
Just this has fashioned
Or just thus has wrought,
And all those trees
That drink, in soft quiescence,
Clear-pearled rain,
Are a sweet symbol
Of resurgent life
Climbing the year again.

Now through the great grave street
Walk myriad people
To their darg addressed.
I feel an ordered calm,
A rhythmic ease,
A moving power suppressed.

A thronged bridge soon
Arches the river
Jumbled by the rain.
Gulls curious are awing.
Through much dull street
I go to work again.

THOR PASSES

I heard a wagon roll along the way,
A heavy lorry heaped with shivering steel,
Piled angle-irons, clanging, dinting on,
That rocked and swayed the unequal jar to feel
Of cobbled roads. I said as it was gone
Rumbling in troubled haste adown the quay,
"Thor's chariot goes where gods with hammers
are,"
That lorry seemed to me the Smith-God's car.

Out of half-distance came a leaping roar
Of labour harnessed, like a cyclone hurled
Against the stable growths of the strong world,
Sweeping to nought what was, and evermore
Crying its mighty message of affray
In hurrying havoc down its trackless way.
A fervour of embattled haste roared there,
Dumb with strained listening was upper air.

I saw chance sunlight catch a pile of casks,
Gilding bright daubs of blue, red, green.
Dock-labourers thronged, black flies, about their
tasks.

A grey gull balanced on an anchored buoy.
Glad in the light of what in light was seen,
Noise, Grime and Labour sang of work as joy.
Deepest delight sings in strong Labour's roar;
Life spent unstinting liveth evermore.

THE LAMPS

I saw the lights along the long dark street
Dancing in a row,
Swinging to and fro.
They called to me,
They cooed to me,
Willing me,
Wooing me,
On with them to go,
And dance upon the bending trees,
And stream and flicker in the breeze.
But, oh! to go with souls like these
Is neither maidenwise nor meet.

And yet; and yet
I cannot bear still to say "no,"
I long to go and go and go,
To swing in chained and ordered row,
With them to beckon to and greet
The winds of night that mutter low
Love-music through them. To and fro,
Swaying, swirling,
So, so, so.

One of the lights along the long dark street,
I dance ancestral light and dark.
My soul is passionate and stark;
No quietude of thought I know.
I weep bright rainbow-haze in rain,
Then burn with undimmed fire again.
A light enchained along the long dark street,
I gleam and beckon. In my pulses beat

Passionate dreams
Of nights and loves most sweet.

Along the long dark street
We are dancing in a row,
Swinging to and fro,
Singing, low, low, low,
Calling to you,
Cooing to you,
Willing you,
Wooing you,
On with us to go,
And dance about the bending trees,
And stream and flicker in the breeze,
And weep in rain a rainbow-haze,
And light love's light in murky ways
Till sleep all strong desire appease.

WIND AND RAIN

Wind in the street !
Wind in the street !
 Sighing, sighing !
Eerie 'tis to hear
Wailing wild and strange
Of the spent year dying :
Dying in my heart
 With the wind
In the street !

Rain on the roof !
Rain on the roof !
 Falling, falling !
Fain would I believe
It is spring in winter
To a tired heart calling ;
Calling to my heart
 Through the rain
On the roof !

RAIN IN THE CITY

Mile upon mile of streets, all smoke-grimed grey,
Broken nowhere by any blade of green,
Save where some withered fruits and flowers are
seen

In a greengrocer's booth along the way.
The sullen rain streams down in heavy sheets,
Deadening the traffic's harsh, incessant roll,
A flood of hopeless tears for earth's scarred soul,
Shed from heaven's eyes upon life's blackened
streets.

The sound hath in it something of the grace
Of wholesome life mid lovely growing things,
Of shoots that push and swell, of hurrying springs
That in full flood adown wet hill-sides race.
Heard in the woods the falling rain doth tell
Of life and growth; but here doth ring life's knell.

PALE GOLD SUNSET IN THE CITY

Day dies 'in gold,
Mid swirling eddied smoke,
Pale fire, day's pyre !

Poplars are black on gold,
Plumes hearsing weary day ;
Poplars about the square
Wave by day's grave.

Smoke-clouds sweep to entomb
Day, stately-palled in gold,
Pale fire, day's pyre !

SUNSET

In smoke earth-born o'er fire of aerial day,
Her sunset-robcs, the city slips away
Through glooming dusk to night's blue mystery,
Lulled in still pools of sleep awhile to lie
And gather strength to wage the morrow's strife.
In fret and jar of over-laboured life
Even as through limpid quietude she goes.
From her bulk break red flakes, half drowsed she
glows
Capriciously with unquenched restlessness,
Purrs with half action, whimpers hushed distress,
Moves, stirs, and turns, roars laughter, heaves a
sigh,
Pricked by strange nightmare-starts neath star-
strewn sky.
Fair seems the city that with fading day
Dons sunset-robcs of splendour and away
Through purple, gold, and rose of eve is borne
To mirk night's realm where she must dream till
morn.

CITY SONNETS

I

Oft have I sat high in a library
Where o'er the park looks towered Gilmorehill,
And, as my sated thoughts o'ercame my will,
Turned from my books to gaze on earth and sky.
Then has the grey scene that without did lie
Pressed with chill, formless fingers on my brain,
Till weariness, grown to a throbbing pain,
Beat through my soul in waves, unceasingly.
Then have I heard men praise this dreary town,
Saying, that nowhere else do shades of grey
Weave harmonies of purple, blue, and brown,
Nowhere such splendours gild the close of day
As where in smoky mists the sun goes down,
Piercing thick blackness with each level ray.

II

Ever their praise fell idly on my ear.
Where they found beauty, nothing did I see
But a drear shroud of grey monotony
Through which fair, living things defaced appear.
Birch-bark or beech, each in this atmosphere
Is alike black, and spectre black is seen
Each naked, ebon branch mid thickest green,
When summer enters with the mellowing year.
I dreamed of cities spreading white and fair
Long stately vistas neath a clear, blue sky,
Where fine proportion and high symmetry
Crowned with large peace the busy walks of man,
And sunbeams falling o'er each façade there
In golden light and azure shadow ran.

Oh, for a robe of scarlet, pure, undimmed,
 Fresh from the loom, or rusty-stained by time
 And salt sea-air, the trophy in his prime
 Of some fierce rover ! Oh, for the cup, gold-rimmed,
 Gem-studded, with the sparkling mead o'er-
 brimmed,
 He raised to his grim gods pouring drink offering !
 Webs of Tyre's purple ; Eastern merchants
 proffering
 Their silken rugs, skilled artists wove and limned !
 Oh, for the jade's faint, sea-translucent greens,
 And brown-cream tints of ivories wondrous old,
 The bronze gold-flushed of looted temple-screens,
 Or storied window's blazonry untold !
 Pure colour from all ages, objects, climes
 To warm the numbed soul these grey mists enfold !

IV

Have you not marked on a grey winter's day
 Some poor Italian organ-grinder ply
 His most mock-joyous trade industriously
 With vacant eyes and glances far away ?
 Have you not wondered on what southern bay
 He saw blue waves dance ? What deserted town
 Perched on a crag, its lemon-orchards down
 Sloped to the sea's marge with azaleas gay
 He gazed upon ? Or, in what golden clime,
 With the sun's children cast his purple wealth
 Into the press, rejoicing in the prime
 Of autumn's crowning hour when Ceres' self,
 Whose praise they sing in many an ancient rhyme,
 From open arms sheds plenty, joy and health ?

Perhaps 'tis farther north his spirit flits,
 To sun-baked Umbria with its olives grey,
 Where, wrapped in dreams of many a martial day,
 Each towered city on its hill-top sits.
 White oxen with low bells and heavy breath
 Climb to Assisi round the last steep turn;
 The sunlight winks on a tall copper urn,
 And o'er each street fast spreads the grass of death.
 For him maybe the traffic's ceaseless hum
 Has passed into the locust's sleepy song,
 Or from St. Francis' church faint murmurs come
 Of morn and even mass; or 'tis the long
 Slow throbbing note of convent-chimes he hears,
 Charged with the pious thoughts of countless years.

VI

Not less than he, though nurtured mid these grey,
 Chill scenes, and though no mother-town allured
 Me south, 'twas by such dreams that I endured
 Each drear month through, day after weary day.
 What worth has work done with the soul away?
 Mine grew no less mechanical than his,
 Mere duteous idleness in libraries,
 For creeping dullness o'er my brain held sway.
 Thought after thought folded bright wings and
 slept,
 Frail inspiration drooped with fading head.
 Through the dim chamber of the sheeted dead
 That once were fair conceptions, stupor crept.
 Fancy, that still on beauty's wings doth rise,
 Clapsed pallid hands, and fluttered weary eyes.

THE SHIP-MAKERS

What is this serried maze of giant spears
That round the silver serpent-stream appears?
What is this clamour that assails mine ears?

The gods had smithies in Earth's infant days:
The gods shaped bright blades in the leaping blaze
Of furnaces: strong were their works and ways.

The gods knew labour, and rejoiced in craft:
The gods to the tall galleon raised the raft,
And reckless in their skill exultant laughed.

What is this clamour that mine ear assails?
The sky at its insistence, greying, quails.
The wind with shattered music discord wails.

Did ever god foresee such strife as this,
Of mighty labour such a synthesis,
Or skill Titanic, so o'ermastering his?

Not spears I see, but haze of serried spars;
Not fires eternal of fore-doomèd stars
These flames, but high creation's avatars.

By the grey serpent-folds of a slight stream
Crowd the ship-makers of my glorious dream,
And pigmies to them all the old gods seem.

Is there a vision so complex or grand,
A thing so nobly fair by sea or land
As a great ship uprising from the strand

Over the element it soon shall dare
To shake its fashioned strength, compel to bear
Its labouring souls and purpose everywhere?

About my stream crowd brains that dream in power
These subtle fabrics, and from hour to hour
Bend to their shaping, forces dull that lower

Threatening, subside, break out to form again,
And know no dream but fullness coarse in grain
Brought by compulsion to unthinking pain,

Untiring patience. Ah! what brains are these
For width of outlook, in emergencies
For swift re-fusion, in their energies

Instinctive and adaptive, swift as fine,
Drawn by the beauty rare of bending line
To work wide-reaching magic of design!

Square, square and stout, heirs of the old earth-
gnome.

Tool-forgers and tool-wielders, lo! they come
Dreaming new wonders from their mother's womb.

Large, large of heart, in laughters coarse and free,
Bending the imperfect into what must be,
Fashioning fame in joy of mastery.

Now men, now things, are counters in their game.
Now fierce earth-forces to their needs they tame.
With glance unmoved they hold each tool the same

Or equal, as it aids to give their goal

More to their eyes, upraising as a whole
The uncalculable thing that is their soul.

“Thus much so much will do,” they seem to say,
“I may not argue with its yesterday
Or bid it do more than it ever may.”

And, as the ships they build go sliding home
To that they grew for, their great makers roam
In them through Life Eternal, whence they come.

O men of magic and of mystery,
O tamers of the olden tameless sea,
How great is Man that breeds such gods as ye!

I saw an ancient stout ship-maker stand
Beside his work, no measuring rod in hand,
For in his glance Proportion took her stand.

I watched his seeking hand the model hew
Live from the wood, his eye abstracted too
That, seeing nought, forbade mine eyes to view

His labour, though with reverence moved and deep
I hoped into his shaping soul to creep
And watch him wake his visioned ship from sleep.

This man, being priest of a high mastery
And craft divine, might not he searched by me
In strong conception: even though 'twas he

Gave me the soul that longed the soul to find
Of his endeavour, probe his building mind,
And hail him kinsman in another kind.

Tireless is strength ; and ruthless but serene
The strong and godlike, knowing what they mean
And dominating with their life its scene.

Strong was my sire in labour, grown an art :
A quiet music was his making heart :
He took all things and of them was a part.

The ship he fashioned was a thing unknown,
A new creation, for a new need grown
To his skilled thinking instantly his own.

Of stout broad frame, unfathomable eye,
Dark sleeping passion, changeless courtesy,
Simple in gaiety, austere and high,

Indomitable, beyond question sure
When hopeless he must strive, must all endure
For nought, of purpose generous and pure,

Broad as humanity in gentleness,
In work of an unbending carefulness,
In giving of an equal nobleness

Was he who as my spirit walks with me
In intimate oneness, whom I knew to be
Still greater than his opportunity.

I have heard conference of ship-makers three,
This born to Science, that to Mystery,
And one who hoped the heir of both to be.

The maker of " Leviathan " was there.
Not thinned or silvered was his tufted hair,
A youth of boundless life was in his air.

Stout his taut frame. Power slept within his eye,
His cleft square chin threatened inclemency
Of wrath to that would thwart his potency.

He was the man to whom dim figures give
Their secrets, he the forms that make them live,
Shaking crude facts to order through the sieve

Of lucid reason, with a laugh of power,
Pause of consideration, sudden tower
Of swift hypothesis, or, as the hour

Brought statement new, ruthless analysis.
The last the youth, who dreaming hoped all this
Ripe wisdom to draw through his mind, make his,

Questioned and listened, while new power flamed
high,
New thoughts and forms thrilled old craft's mys-
tery,
New changeful ships sailed to Infinity

O'er the wide ocean that links all the world,
New fleets of peace and those that bear unfurled
Imperial blazon, prows disdainful curled

And steel-tubes speaking in unsparing fire
To those who brave our proud Britannia's ire,
And strength quiescent no long wraths can tire.

The last, the youth that from far seas had sought
The ancient Art here long so sagely taught,
And with him glories of far empire brought,

Was hewn in strength of grey rock whence he
 sprang,
Yet Southern sunshine through his laughter rang,
In his slow syllables gold spaces sang.

A proud race stretched o'er deserts wide, untamed,
Its hand possessive, force with heart unshamed,
Unspent in living, passion's might proclaimed.

Laughter and Death were knit in bonds of love,
Unsearched Infernos sought with Heaven above,
Honour and Pride a word to wrath could move.

And strife was natural pleasure, rapture keen
Daring, for trifles offered unforeseen
Forsook the future, left what late had been.

Mid our mist-haunted isles, in olden days
Home of his kin, from wider walks and ways
His eyes recall blue oceans without haze

Of fog-enshrouded North ; the dazzling brine
Of Southern seas in their blue deep doth shine,
Grace of the South is in each lazy line

Of his long limbs, as still he bends to hear
Old argument wherein still reappear
Old triumphs and old tales, for many a year

Dear to the heart and tongue of those who frame
Our navies and our argosies, set fame
And fortune on their judgment, make their name

Ring wide for great achievements greatly dared,

Great enterprises with great toil prepared,
Wisdom conceived, great glory greatly shared.

On phantom tides their talk sails out and in.
From clamours hoarse, of urgent making's din,
I watch old mighty progresses begin.

Now many a gracious craft on woven wings
Through many a distant ocean nobly swings.
An Odyssey of ships my father sings,

Of sailing ships, sirens for men, man-wrought,
And thrills of beauty these proud beauties brought,
With stately glories years diminish not.

Of fair-scrolled figure-heads and polished teak,
Of myriad sails, I hear my father speak
And reputations won in a wild week

Of racing westward from the China Sea
With awnings tacked to yards, bringing green tea
In enulous haste, home, ere it spoiled should be

By ocean airs : of captains dandified
Or stout and rough, ship-makers who defied
All theory, proof, in practice sage applied.

One such I see, rough as the men he ruled,
By whose harsh vigour was my father schooled
To look with judgment sound not fancy-fooled,

And I think deep—of one stuff these men are
With those stout sailors who adventuring far
In tiny vessels, saw the morning star

Of England's greatness rise in the far west
And Spain impotent-potent at the crest
Of her stained greatness, smiting dispossessed

Forever of her sole imperial sway—
Of one same stuff, and one same ruthless way
In action are these sailors passed away

And such ship-makers as my father knew,
Through whose wise practice rules to science grew,
Which still is growing. Give them honour due,

You who for wooden walls build walls of steel
About this Empire, and deep reverence feel
For all they wrought to her immortal weal.

Now of ship-science goes the argument,
Material old to changing purpose bent,
The uncertain action of the element.

Again to graver themes the still room rings,
The needs and hopes of men who shape the things
Ship-makers dream, and danger new that springs

From empty prate of false equality,
Half-education, and the rivalry
Of changing classes through democracy.

Of worthless hirelings who in poisonous talk
Scatter their venom, and, a foul plague, stalk
Or crawl, base vermin, o'er the work they balk.

Of labour scamped save neath the master's eye,
Of that rare thing, the craftsman's dignity,
And what 'Toil's baseless hopes shall by and by

Bring on this people if God save it not,
Of filth and coarseness from rough metals got,
And dullness from enduring a dull lot.

Through all, the sense of slightness in what holds
The body to its shaping brain, of folds
That grow constraining bonds, of Law that moulds

Men's destiny about to seek in night
Of cataclysmic chaos a new flight
To clear restatement, and some gentler right.

These men who are the shaping souls that swing
The untiring hammer, bid the anvil ring,
And breed hard muscles in long labouring,

Speak of the men who by their sinews are
Shaping dreamed ships as brothers, not as far
Removed in kind, sons of a lesser star,

Less lucent planet ; as their very flesh
They think of those who every morn afresh
With them new problems of new labour thresh

Through to solution. All their lives they know
Their cares and struggles ; gravely reason so
Of how the finished plans may justly go

To high completion by their instrument ;
All clamorous selves to one great aim be bent,
Till into one all strifes in power be blent.

Such talk as this nourished my youthful days,
Such talk as this to effort turned my ways,
Even as sea-wind the unshielded sapling sways

Landwards, unsparing in its constancy
Of strong direction, till the very ply
Of every atom with the breeze doth fly,

Till the tree bends even as the wind doth blow,
Till twisted branches tattered banners show,
Hopes that look forth where they may never go.

A child, I learned how each true craftsman deems
Honour as life one with the work he dreams
Till all beside of bauble import seems.

How such are girt about, past weariness,
By a compelling fierce unrestingness
In effort, all attuned to tirelessness

In their high function. How the spirit flies
Ecstatic to new action in the eyes
As sober thought to insight swift replies !

Dear brown calm walls, jewelled with glowing store
Of friendly wisdom, new and ancient lore,
Old smoke-wreaths float your varied lustres o'er

As my three ship-makers in conclave sage
Forecast the future, probe the passing age,
Writing their lives in labour on the page

Of progress, glorious with high use of time.
Adown my memories old ship-bells chime
Melodious from sea-graves in many a clime

Diverse and distant. The tense stir I hear
Of narrow seas, strange harbours far appear
Thronged with great craft, conceived, begotten here.

As from this quietude to work they go,
My men and masters, 'tis not mine to know
Them when in bonds of their great task they show

Grim and repellant, strung and charged with force
Destructive or creative as the course
Of their life's labour broadens from its source

Of vigour tearing swift in sunder still
Whatsoever impedes its dumb resistless will,
Seeking the sea from far cloud-haunted hill.

'Tis not for me to judge the minds I love,
Where in crude worlds of action wide they rove
Or passion stark red strife in them can move.

But mid the clang of hammers was I born
Of Effort, to hold silken ease in scorn,
In littleness not ugliness forlorn.

And I have learned to let my fancies range
In quickened power about infernos strange,
Where harnessed lives to mighty creatures change

The desolate spoil of mine and stricken wood
And, thrilled by shaping force scarce understood,
Feel over chaos grim new order brood.

These men are bent to draft a perfect line,
In figures power or safety these define.
Without, behold a mighty furnace shine

Lambent, portentous, through dull winter grey
Of lowering noon ; scarce seems there aught of day,
So swift mirk stealeth lights and shapes away

From sight ; how spectral in its eddyng force
That scene ; how changeless still its turmoil hoarse
Appears ; how puny all its vast resource,

Intensest action ! Thronging surge and go
The men who fashion what the makers know,
Sombre their shapes, their paces bowed and slow.

Old Toil obscures them in his livery dark,
By flame and fire they show distorted, stark,
Subdued to filth inbreathed none seems to mark.

On yon man's face behold skill's impress fair,
Watch sure achievement in that careless air,
And strength serene in some pose debonair

Of massive torso with huge arms upflung.
Hear crude profanity on acid tongue
Or warning shout, like panic's tocsin rung,

And shapes quiescent leap in sudden strife
To swift new rhythms as things dead to life,
Ere noise recur and greyness dim be rife

With hurrying shapes. Day, quivering gloomily,
Throbs out her painful music wearily ;
Strong labour-pangs rend her incessantly.

Like swarming flies men crawl o'er ribs of steel,
Long perilous patience and dumb strength they
 feel
Fetter them fast with every blow they deal.

Here a great keel extendeth ; stretching slow

Through its low man-holes stooping labourers go ;
There scattered rivet-fires elusive glow.

Now frames are fixed, and plates are swung and set
Duly in place with growing jar and fret
Of each dead part that life whole shall beget.

Is it a township that shall sail the sea,
Hope-winged, fear-urged, in its steel panoply,
These needs of men hammer so lustily ?

Is it destruction swift in fragile shell
Or tough-forged carapace close-set that well
Fire breathing can the breath of fire repel

From its heart-chambers, and its trust uphold,
Offence and guardianship, as swift and bold
It cleaves grey seas of winter misty cold ?

Is it a fort or caravanserai
They fashion for their bellies' need who sway
Tools of survival as in Noah's day ?

Be that as may, still grey shapes creeping throng
To their grey tasks while rumblings hoarse prolong
Mutterings gainst Fate—the leashed soul's labour-
song.

Who will gainsay monotony of toil ?
Grime's strong oppression, anguish of turmoil
Incessant, endless, smoke's pervading soil ?

Yet the proud ship by men who work for bread

Is fashioned fit and to far-faring sped ;
Strength is engendered, and the toiler's head,

Half-conscious, with proud honour's guerdon graced.
Fatigue well borne and danger lightly faced
Seem in achievement, Death by Life outpaced.

For, O ye men whose urge of industry
Tames to man's service the wide lonely sea,
If ye make ships, made like your ships are ye.

Of age-long patience symbol strong ye stand,
Foul with your craft o'er the craft-foulèd land,
Graceless and coarse, what power is in your hand !

Even massed together the heart knows you are
Stable and kind when most you wander far,
From order lured by pleasures gross that mar

Your usefulness, binding the muddled brain
More harshly than the bonds it must sustain
Of effort rude that scarce mere life doth gain.

In toil and climate stern how stoutly grow
The men who are this country ! Well they know
That hurl our grim hill-torrents on a foe

Dire as implacable, who, less than they
In soul and purpose, still to them gives way,
And yields to the wild Scot his ancient sway

Of heart and sword perfervid, grim and wight.
Each individual is a blade whose bright
Metal is grained with gore of ancient fight.

Each company moves like a purple moor
To a sea-gendered wind, wild-springing dour,
Holding in death as life its victory sure.

With blazoned valour, deathless high renown
New-writ as old, in kilted pride pace down
Time's mouldering fields, our lads of glen and town,

Border, and strath, and wind-swept, lone, sea-isle ;
Deep is their sleep in many a charnel pile
Of ruined lands as many a weary while

Weep for their loss eyes that no more shall be
Made glad in dear lost eyes they used to see
Look love, or longing, or tranquillity.

Long struggle with a niggard element,
Old loyalty to wider purpose bent,
Grim trust of self with dumb religion blent,

Of thy stout sons an empire's bulwark frame !
O Scotland, yet it is thine ancient name
Dying they utter, 'tis thy deathless fame

Dearer than bridal kisses they desire,
Thy mists in them are white insatiate fire
And towards thy soul beloved their souls aspire

In parting. That which quits their shattered clay
Can never, O stern Mother, gaunt and grey,
Pass from thy rugged bosom's strength away.

Of one race are our kilted lads who go,
To war-chants wild, dauntless against the foe
With such as stress of ceaseless labour know.

Through those the honour of the regiment,
Labour achieved through these its thrill has sent,
And from exhaustion has emerged content.

The ship stands finished on her launching-ways.
Knock out the props, loosen the cradle-stays,
Stand back and on her quickening down-rush gaze !

“ This thing is ours, born of our blood and sweat.
To shape her thus, his brain, our muscle met,
And such fair things can brain and muscle get.

“ Remember the long night of thrumming haste,
Grim toil that finished her. May I not taste
Clean meat again if ever were outfaced

“ The master when he fastened on his task,
Or one of us dispute what he might ask.
A tranquil look his purpose firm doth mask.

“ Cloaked is authority in fellowship
And high command resorts to a gay quip,
But hints its lightning; ah, how strong the grip

“ Of the born leader over men can be
Whose aims, being set within a sympathy
For hands he works by, labouring hearts can see !

“ The ship stands ready on her cradle set.
Can we who built her while we live forget
That last long spell when storm nor mirk might let

“ Us from our labour ere she stood complete,
A vision bodied, stout and fit and feat,
Buxom and ample, each line curving sweet ?

“ ‘The Sabbath is for rest, the Lord’s own day.
Shall a man’s need take from these men away
Their hours of worship and repose and play?

“ ‘Finished on Monday forth this boat must go.
So many days of rain make work move slow.
His needs who buys, nought of such hindrance
know.

“ ‘We bear God’s weather, that indeed is true,
Yet without rest no man his task can do,
And I shall get no blessing driving you.

“ ‘This night, then, our long task shall finished be,
All with one will and toiling valiantly,
We’ll end this job and keep the Sabbath free.’

“ Wind-gusts fled tearing through close framework
spars.
Clouds piled and scattered, hiding all the stars.
Chill rain-bursts stung like spears of mimic wars.

“ Yet louder than the storm’s demoniac wrath
Swelled the grim note insistent labour hath,
When through mere time it cleaves its godlike
path.

“ With clang of hammers all along her sides,
Shivered the ship as though salt racing tides
Already beat against wrought strength that rides

“ Untamed the welter of their heaving ways.
White naphtha-flares the wind capricious sways,
Bright streaming pennons, glittering baleful rays.

“ Mid clotted dark, red beds of ashes shine,
And sodden figures stream a bending line
Through chequered gleams in changeful marred
design.

“ Forward the painters smear her curving prow,
In rhythm to their sweeping brush-strokes bow,
Relight their pipes, report her finished now.

“ But still abaft crowd the skilled gangs that key
The slim propeller to its shaft. Ah, see
Toil grown a giant thirsting for deity !

“ The master stretched above holds forth a flare
At arm's length down ; in its fierce darting glare
Strange lights and shadows frolic everywhere.

“ The air throbs neath the half-uttered terse com-
mand ;
The men, scarce conscious of its meaning, stand
Or move responsive, singly, as a band.

“ With rain and grime and sweat their bodies gleam,
Like Titans mid a world unshaped they seem,
And force breaks from them a resistless stream.

“ This is the dance of power compelling shape,
The surge of life that will from death escape,
Creation's daring that its god doth ape.

“ Almost the task is done, the master's tone
Hints neath its calm the word that shall make
known
The task's completion, and each man his own

“ Once more. Swift, swift the wingèd moments fly.
Short is the week’s shrift ; soon it comes to die.
Twelve rings its requiem out deliberately,

“ But, ere the last stroke throbbed its sober note,
Finis in gold the maker’s angel wrote,
As the spent labourers, straightened, on the boat

“ Their hands had fashioned gazed insatiately,
A dark bulk set gainst a wind-harried sky,
And knew their lives part of her history.”

The gods had smithies in earth’s infant days,
The gods wrought metals white from leaping blaze
Of the forge-fire ; strong were their works and ways.

The gods that Labour knew and joyed in Craft,
Dreamed the first dream and drew Creation’s draft,
And ’tis from cups divine that still have quaffed

Earth’s makers the elixir rare of skill,
The heaven-engendered tirelessness of will,
And all that maketh work harmonious still.

Hushed is the din that late mine ear assailed,
Sunset’s brave rose to sullen dusk has paled
And, with the light, the plaintive wind has failed.

Beside the river glimmering mirk and gloam
Where spear-like coloured lights swift go, swift come,
Wanness to wanness, deep in thought, I roam.

Ships of to-morrow all about me lie
Finished, half finished, graceless, neath a sky
Where murky earth in piled cloud-travesty

Dreams pomp of cities blown in smoke away
To show heaven's stars, or lit by rose of day
Flickering athwart night's slow dispersing grey.

Ships of to-morrow in the gloaming change
To skeletons of monsters vast and strange,
As black on black about them clinging range

Fantastic shades. Ribs whence all flesh is gone,
Tapering to heaven, frail, splintered, mouldering
bone,
Are these beginnings that I gaze upon

In hush of morn : or old armed creatures they
Seem all transformed to steel in panoply
They once did wear of ages passed away.

On restless pillows the ship-makers dream
Of labour, ere reiterant whistles scream
Harsh calls to tasks that never-ending seem.

With tramp of foot, with wakening engines' roar,
Through gates of toil the hurrying toilers pour,
And silence frightened voids that ghostly shore.

THE FAIR

Take the width of the street
For your roistering jollity.
The Fair has a bacchanal leer,
And a drunken joy.
Who would love wisdom, be sober,
Might drink deep and all folly try?
Take the width of the street,
The free lurching of muscles, drink-loosened, is
sweet.

Take the width of the street;
Stick your hat on the back of your head;
Perspire loud hilarity.
July is jovial in air.
Your thews labour-toughened, bulk big.
You drink. Why on earth should you wonder why,
—Hat stuck on the back of your head,—
This is sweet;
Why to this as pure pleasure your work-wearied
fancies are led?

Take the width of the street.
You have laboured, be joyous in ease.
Whisky? Yes, and a laugh and a lurch,
With a frolicsome crook of the knees.
Those two women there, see,
Have the leer of the Fair in them too,
Reeling on, each a babe in her arms!
Says the proverb, the drunk and the babe,
The gods shield from all harms.
Sure 'tis true,
Since unhurt still they be.

Once Love led these women to church ;
Now deep drinking is sweet—
And the dance of the Fair down the width of the
street.

The Fair takes the width of the street,
Fruits, shows, cheap gewgaws.
Lad and lassies impassioned, entwined
Through the July noon, find
A way to some populous Eden
Their love maketh lonely as sweet.
Small lives everywhere
Thread gay crowds in a game of delight.
The heat of a still July day
Wanes gold-opal in still July night.
The Fair has a humorsome leer,
A tricked smirk and a carnival grin;
A kiss, and a laugh, and an oath,
Drowned in hiccups, I catch through his full-bellied
din.

The Fair has the eyes of a child,
Tired with breathing fresh air ;
In his hands wilt great white marguerites ;
With frail ferns that already have died
Are entwined honeysuckles, the late summer's pride;
On his drink-sodden breath are expiring their
sweets.

The Fair has a handkerchief red
Filled with welks, nods his head
With a whimpering cry, is besmeared
And "begrutten," and ready for bed.
The Fair to the heart is endeared

When a child tired with pleasure deep in it has
smiled.

But the Fair takes the width of the street,
Has a bacchanal leer
And a drunken joy,
The breath of the grave of delight,
The sodden repletion of night.
After toping, past hoping
It is, that the pot-bellied one
Should confine his gross self and grow fine,
The god of fresh air draw away
From the belly-god's border,
The creature of hiccups and oaths
Bid adieu to disorder.
Yet the Fair has the joy of a child
In his heart, and a rapture of lovers springs wild
Through his looseness, to kissings and claspings
Most secret and sweet.

STREETS AND QUAYS

I

LIGHTS AND RAIN

Lights flame out here.
How sweet they dance and gleam,
And gleaming dance again !
There is no dancing like the dance of light,
No music like the falling of the rain.

I am wet through, wet through,
Drenched through and dirty to the very bone ;
But I can hear shower-music sweet in all
Melodious over sodden pavements fall,
And when the shower is done
Streams that harmoniously
Through flooded gutters run.

Homeless, I shiver in a biting blast ;
Yet steady street-lamps blaze,
Wild stall-flares stream,
Rich-coloured stars are fixed,
And garlands gay are strung.
Godlike I float in a dark firmament
Of lesser planets whose terrestrial fires
From needs and passions of this earth arise.

Lights cluster here,
That wildly dancing gleam,
Now gleam, now dance again,
There is no dancing like the dance of light,
No music like the falling of the rain.

II

PASSING CROWDS

Drifts, drifts, the dark crowd !
 Herded impotence urged on by need
 That thinks it loiters idle as it please.
 Vague, dull and purposeless,
 Knowing not whence its being,
 Whither it must go,
 Busy with senseless motion,
 Turbulent and slow
 Drifts the dark crowd.

The dark crowd drifts
 Creature of laws unguessed, undreamed,
 Beauty plucked red
 From herding ugliness,
 Power plucked from powerlessness,
 Purpose most strange and awful,
 Moving lack of aim.
 Courage and victory that bear defeat,
 A tattered banner,
 Through life's stricken field,
 Glory in filth and shame,
 Law that knows none,
 Along the sombre street,
 Clamorous, forlorn,
 Through lights that blaze and blaze,
 The dark crowd drifts.

III

NIGHT-SONG

Pavement all glistening black,
 Bright lights stream past and go,

Screams and hoarse laughter low
With footfalls echo as they pass and pass.

What do these huddled flowers there ?
This is no place for sweets of fragile bloom.
O'erladen are the weary flower-girls ;
Lilies breathe sicklied whiteness of the tomb.

This glistening pavement is Death's sullen glass,
Fate's pool that strange lights streak,
Where strange lights dancing drown,
While up and down,
Dull footfalls, echoing, with lost laughter pass.

IV

THE FRUIT SELLER

Massed dark, massed light !
Mid colour clear aswim,
A coarse and fiery gleam,
Red hair, square face !
Tin flares swing wild,
Piled oranges below
Are coals heaped high,
Coals that fantastic glow
Deep in the dank inferno of the night.

I catch their scent, rain-beaten,
To my brain a dram of pungent spirit,
To my wildness all afire fierce life.
Her plaid is tartan,
Her great brassy earrings
Are tamed to quiet

Under sanguine strife
Of plaited red locks,
Diamonded with rain.

In drifts the dark crowds hide her,
Pungent is the odorous strife,
Over strong tang of orange
A sense of crowding bodies hangs in air,
Dank clothes steam heavy as a flock of sheep.
They pass, they part—the crowds—
Square-set and stout,
Defiant red and gold,
She hawks her red and gold
Of southern summer there,
Three for a penny,
Spheres of glowing life.

V

THE PIPER

The piper plays outside the inn,
Up and down and down again.
Stream his ribbons in the rain,
To and to and fro he goes,
Ragged are his tartan hose,
Broken brogues let dampness in,
Kilt and plaid are worn and thin,
Blue his hands and red his nose,
On his chanter shrill he blows,
By strange fervour lit within,
Tameless passion and dull pain
Making music in the rain.

Loafers stand to hear him there,
And the city-traffic flows
Onward in a noisy stream
Through the music of his dream.
Raindrops whiten all the air,
Grief through all his piping flows.
Music of forgotten woes
Wakes far hills to echoing
Feud and fight and death-keening,
Feast and jest and love-longing.
Winds and waters wild it knows,
Little ease of lands and seas,
Bent that sways where blow no trees
Neath mad West Wind's ondinging.
Wind and water to his song,
Soul and underplaint, belong,
Passion, failure, ruth and wrong.
Lost fiends howl and skirl again,
Hate and rage, pain on pain,
Then a frenzy of despair
Blows to shreds his wildest air.
Sinks to soulless capering
Of light feet that lack joy's spring
Laughter cracked within the ring.

The piper plays outside the inn,
Up and up and down again.
Stream his ribbons in the rain,
Blue his hands and red his nose,
To and fro, and fro he goes,
Grief and shame and want he knows,
Sadness of forgotten woes
From his restless music flows,

Eldrich are his notes and thin.
Piper playing in the rain
Pain and shame and pain on pain.

VI

THE ORGAN-GIRL

*Anemones,
Rose to chillest blue,
Smoulder down each purpled hue.
Green-veined white
Sets off the darklier bright.
A child athirst for colour
From their gay cups drinks delight.*

Grinding, grinding in the rain,
Maritana turns away,
Jangled tunes, jingling tunes,
Jingling, jangling round again,
Maritana of the south,
Soft brown eyes, sweet red mouth ;
O'er bandana blue and gold
Night of ringed black hair is rolled.
Organ grinding in the rain,
Jingling tunes, jangled tunes,
Maritana pensive, gay,
Dreameth Winter's gloomy grey
Into blue remembered Junes.

Where drenched flowers huddle in the rain,
Maritana stops to gaze.
Every stall of battered fruits
Wakes her from a chilled amaze,

Calls her home again,
Springs a grove of other days,
Sending dreams of paradise
And the south to light her eyes.

*Anemones,
Rose to coldest blue,
Smoulder down each purpled hue.
Green-veined white
Sets off the darklier bright.
A child athirst for colour
From their gay cups drinks delight.*

VII

THE CHIP-BARROW

Dark heads against a cloud of rosy steam,
Chips for a penny in the open street.
Chips for a penny ! Beauty is a dream,
A jade, a lady any man may meet.
Dark heads against a cloud of rosy steam,
Chips for a penny ! Beauty is a dream !

They make an altar and a hearth for me,
Dark heads against a cloud of rosy steam,
Home for the homeless. Ever shall I be
In peace apparelled of a perfect dream
When such ringed heads gainst golden warmth I
see,
When such flushed clouds float sweetly out to me.

Chips for a penny in the open street
When wind-borne hail-drops like Fate's arrows
sting,

Rain rays and lights o'er shining brasswork meet,
Sullen the sky and sodden everything.
Chips for a penny! Beauty is a dream,
Her bosom swells in curving clouds of steam.

Jack's cart is halted by the rain-washed kerb.
Dark slips the river neath each heavy arch.
Fullness and warmth are good. Time is an herb,
Pungent, not staying. Wearily they march
Through life's damp welter who forget to dream,
Because their boots are thin, warm Beauty's rosy
gleam.

VIII

THE STREET TO THE QUAY

From the clamorous street stray I,
To the still dark quay,
Where at rest from far sea-flights
Tall ships be,
Proud ships lie,
Mast bare, dreamily
Under brooding sky.

River, bearing ships, laps slow,
Ships ride still,
Heedless all of chattering rain
Dream unvexed their fill
Of the world, the wide, strong way
They are travelling night and day.

River, bearing folk, runs on,
Spate resistless without rest,

Side by side with quiet quay.
Darkling wave lifts troubled crest,
Tumult of unresting life,
Surge and smother of wind-strife.

I leave the clamorous street to stray
By the silent quay.
In quiescent majesty,
Sleeping each neath watchful eye,
Of placid light the tall ships lie.

Tall ships that be,
Proud ships that are
Scourers insatiate of grey sea and sky,
The strong, fierce brood
Of the adventurous star.

IX

THE LASCAR

Adown the quay
Musical southern voices
Murmur dulcet, low.
As water clear
From curving vessel falls,
Flow softly gay
Mellifluous, liquidly,
Rich, throaty syllables.

Grips red bandana
A long, lean, brown hand,
Here white teeth flash,
A twist of turban there

Through chill, blue air
Over spare line of cheek
I catch. The lascars pass,
Slow-foot, adown the quay
Their ships to seek,
Lithe-limbed dark creatures,
Leaving lonely me
Eurapt and dreaming
Of an Eastern land.

X

A LASCAR IN THE STREET

Blue jacket, bright eye,
Dark fellow sings :
"Buy a fan, lady,
Try a fan, lady,
Small beetle-scales,
Long peacock's tails,
Humming-birds' wings."

White are his socks,
His slippers are purple,
Crimson the fez on his
Curling black hair.
Shuffles and loiters
And grins in shop-windows
Lascar A.B. on leave,
Taking the air.

Through our grey city
Exotic he passes,
Strange, captive bird,

Slipped its cage in the night.
Furtive and glowing
And fine his slim face is,
Brown blush his pupils
O'er eyeballs blue-white.

Bright red cummerbund,
Gold nose-clasp, gay earrings.
"Buy a fan, lady. Try a fan, lady,
Or of sweet cedar-tree
This carved casket from me,
Cheaper than nothings."
Dark fellows sings :
"Small beetle-scales,
Tall peacock-tails,
Humming-birds' wings.
Try them, I pray you,
Come, buy them of me."

XI

THE ONION-SELLER

Gold lacquer fine of old Japan,
"Onions from the south!" cries he.
"Buy my pungent strings who can,
Glad if you can get any!"

Ample is his blouse of blue,
Black the felted cap he wears ;
To a tawny, golden hue
Bronzed his face by salt sea-air.

Over high cheek-bones is stretched
Taut his thickened, grizzled skin,

Beady blink his ebon eyes,
Lit with shrewdness from within.

Beat him down to half his price,
Add a sixpence to the good,
Onions stewed delight the nice,
Raw with cheese are savoury food.

Gold lacquer out of old Japan,
"Onions from the south!" cries he.
"Buy the pungent strings who can,
Glad if you can get any!"

SONG

Down along the quay,
All along the quay!
Say what bears the brigantine
For my dear and me?

Oranges red-gold,
Silken webs unrolled,
Pods of cotton down
From New Orleans town,
Spice and ivory,
And Father home from sea.

Down along the quay,
All along the quay!
True love bears the brigantine
To my dear and me.

A SQUARE IN FOG

The lone, the mirk, the drear lagoon
Where dull weeds swoon as derelicts drown,
And blind, lost lives swim up and down,
Swim up, and up, and down, and down,
The lone, the mirk, the drear lagoon
Of Dismal Square in Weary Town.

Through wreathing fog, dank pillars rise,
Shapeless and stifled, seeking air,
Human, inhuman travesties
Of lives that once were great or fair :
And in the swirling mirk below
Swim living derelicts to and fro,
Now to, now fro, now up, now down,
Poor, blind, lost lives ! where rank weeds swoon
And eddy mid the drear lagoon
Of Dismal Square in Weary Town.

The brown fog parts. Hewn cliff-walls high
That gird the gloom-encumbered place
Lurch bodeful out a little space.
Clangour of bells, bright lights stream by,
Pale, fettered moons make aureole,
Yearning to heaven, each stifled soul
In thick, dank clutches of such air
As strangleth all things, bright or fair,
While blind, lost lives drift up and down,
Drift up, and up, and down, and down,
The lone, the mirk, the drear lagoon
Of Dismal Square in Weary Town.

From this o'er-travailed, stagnant heart,

The gloom-beridden, weird lagoon,
A dozen mighty arteries
Mysteriously rise and part ;
Rising in gloom, flow gloomily,
Shrouded in fog, away, away ;
With passing calls and clangours go
Whence blind lost lives surge to and fro,
Where derelicts drown as dull weeds swoon,
And restless feet fall hollowly,
Soughings of a troubled sea,
Vexing the lone, the mirk lagoon
Of Dismal Square in Weary Town.

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN

The glare of swift-spluttering naphtha is gone,
Dull octagon lamps scarce show
Piled fruits below,
So sickly their beams where shone
Wild ray of flickering flame
In the days of long ago;
For the days when the world had peace
Are the days of long ago.

Dull are the octagon lamps, yet they give
To the mass of those hurrying crowds
The mirk enshrouds
Sole guiding gleam:
For the lost white suns are quenched,
And gay-coloured streamers seem
Less memory than dream
To the folks who live
Lives shorn in two
With the end of the days of peace,
The days of long ago.

The cars pass shrouded and veiled,
Blinking eyes that peer through the night,
Now crawl, now plunge, through the folk
That swarm on their hidden way,
White shadows their gleams evoke
From the gloom where their strange bulks sway
Vibrating, pulsing, as though they sailed
Lost seas by some hidden might
Of purpose unuttered and could not cease,

Though mirk are the gleaming ways
Of the days of peace,
From their labours of long ago.

Through the gloom the roar of the street
Is the one thing real on the ear,
Strange faces and forms massed dark.
Wan-gleaming, swift disappear
As we see them streaming along,
The hum of their speech, the fall
Of their shuffling restless feet,
The fret of their lawless power
As a creature chaotic, the mark
In their seething and swaying stream
Of a force transcending thought,
On whose loom all life is wrought
To its form majestic,
Raise in that boding hour
The shape of a monster dim
Dragging through age-old slime
His folds on regardless folds
That a common purpose holds,
Though its will be hid from him.

Through the gloom the roar of the street
Is harsh as the tumult of hell.
The scrannel beating of countless feet
Is the syllabled breath of a black old spell.
The people smothered in dark of war
Streams on, teems on. We know they are
There uncounted, enduring so
Life's woes as in days of peace
In the days of long ago.

A MARCH PAST

Bare knee to bare knee,
Kilts swing jauntily.
Flash of a smile
Meets glance of an eye.
There where in peace once
They dallied carelessly
The girls look longing
As the lads march by.

Gleam bare brown knees,
Beat steps earth-shaking,
Sweep green kilts a-row
Over chequered stocking,
Once more in dalliance
Would you fain be walking,
Lads, as you go
Laughing so?

Are deep regrets
Longings vain wild waking
In your hearts below?
Do these merry smiles,
Does that gallant glance,
Tell of courage proud
Over love's heart breaking?

You are singing loudly,
You are stepping proudly,
Lads, as you go,
Khaki, green, and crimson,
In a stout strong row
O'er familiar miles,

Haunts of careless ease
Neath the greening trees,
Searching rosy faces
For the girls you know.

Bare knee to bare knee,
Kilts swing jauntily.
Tear calls to smile
In a tender eye,
Love calls to young love
Passing by.
Clasp close, kiss long
The dear past escaping you.
The girls look longing
As the lads march by.

THE RIVER-STEAMER

Big paddles like big sleeves quite out of date,
A boat whose timbers ooze the river's smell
In baking sun. A small old sailor man
Upon her bridge; forth from her thronged decks
come

Old formless wheezy tunes, an idle busy hum.
The blind musician his melodeon sways
Now out, now in, the boatswain luggage weighs.
Down from the Broomielaw on summer days
The ancient steamer churns her lazy ways.
She swims along by sunny idle quays,
Strains at her cables, crackles in the heat.
Familiar jests familiar orders meet;
Familiar bustle jostles silence sweet.
Thick river odours steal through purer air,
A moment's heaviness. Old and asthmatical
The tired melodeon maunders on and on
"Flow Gently, Afton", as blind fingers fall
Over its keys. The steamer parts, is gone.
With her goes gentle Memory, slow, idyllical,
Dreams or an idle summer hushed and still and
fair.

"Flow Gently, Afton" dies down still blue air.

WALKING WESTWARD

In a dream of towers on amber,
Terrace grey and ebon tree,
Where blue-hooded lights gleam faintly,
She is walking home with me,
And the ordered midnight beauty
Of the mighty town we see.

Up the stairway to that dark church
I have conjured out of air
To her eyes a slow procession
Walking gravely pair by pair,
Priests with anthems, censers swinging,
Banners bright with blazon rare.

She has heard the organ rolling
Waves of praise through yon dim aisle ;
She has seen the people seeking
Peace through prayer in that old pile ;
Watched a girl take holy water
From her lover with a smile.

That indeed is purest fancy,
For a wizard speaks in me ;
But the beauty of yon staircase
Is a thing of masonry,
Solid block and smooth-piled pillar,
Gravity and symmetry.

And the spires upon the sky-line,
And the clear-cut sable trees,
The strong horseman on the hill-brow,
With his rifle on his knees,

The keen sentry in the hollow,
She regards. Brave sights like these

Take her eyes and heart restless,
Walking westwards in the gloom;
College-gateway, towers and turrets,
Church and houses, to her come,
In a rhythm of new beauty
With a binding magic home.

So the greatness of this city
Couchant, sleeping, seems to be
Borne upon her rebel spirit
Like a song of mystery,
Like some old god-shaping ritual
Speech makes an impiety.

Greatness, greyness, power in slumber,
By each terraced line and tower,
By dark tree, proud bridge, smooth river,
Deep we bless you in this hour!
We have seen you fair in slumber;
Let us say when dull skies lower,

Let us say in hours of gloom :
" We have seen you, fair in slumber,
Called you queen, and owned you fine,
When slight towers were dark on amber,
When faint lights gleamed sparse and far,
You have held us in your sombre

Arms, and whispered in our ears
Spells of still unmeasured might.
We have heard your great heart beating
With slow pulse-beats of the night ;

And have felt that did we love you
We could read your soul aright."

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